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Simon Kenton, the pluckiest
woodsman upon the Ohio

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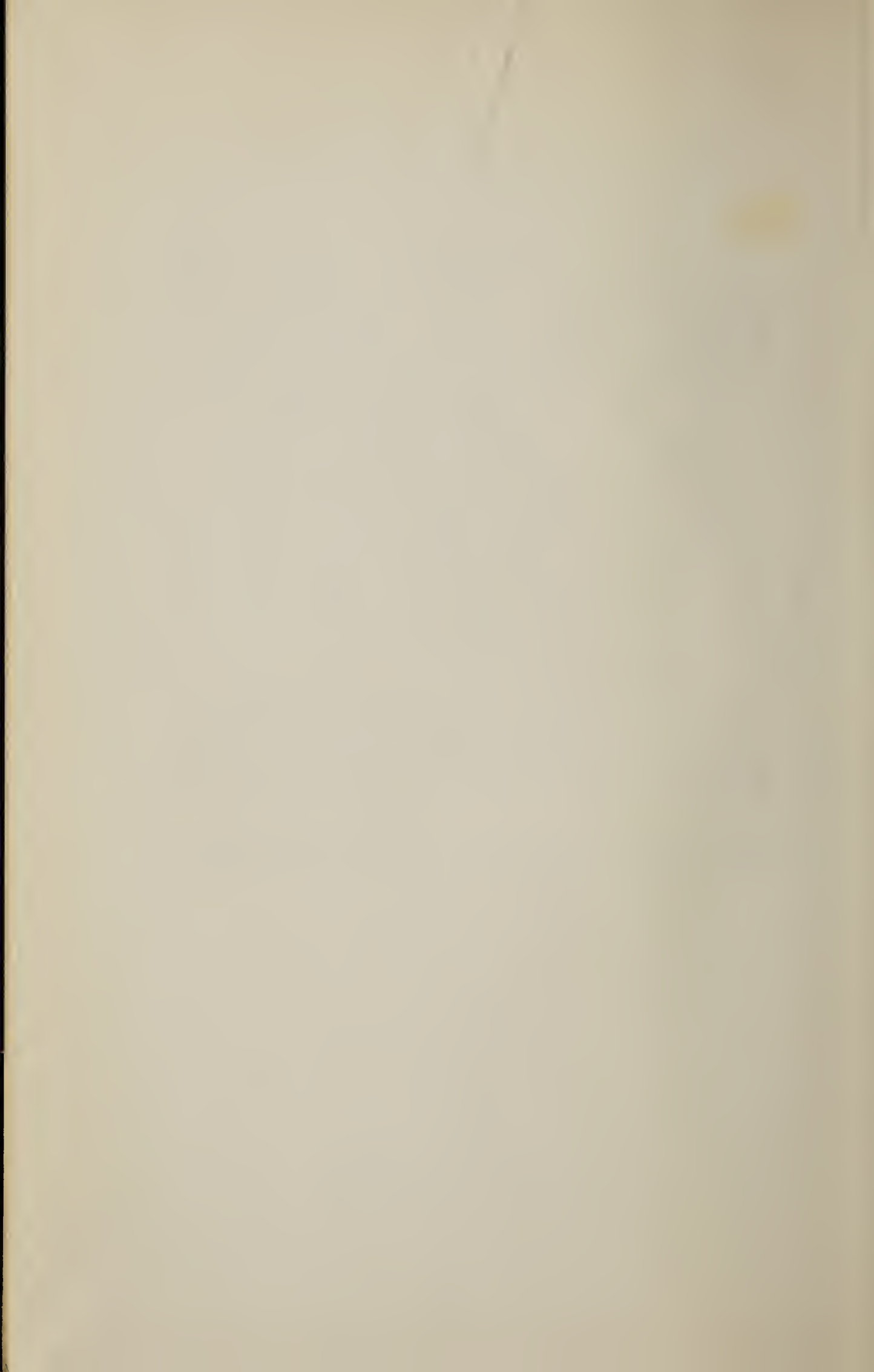


SIMON KENTON

The Pluckiest Woodsman upon the Ohio Frontier

by

Charles H. L. Johnston



REFERENCE

Simon Kenton

The Pluckiest Woodsman upon the Ohio Frontier

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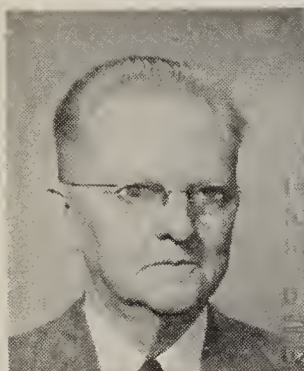
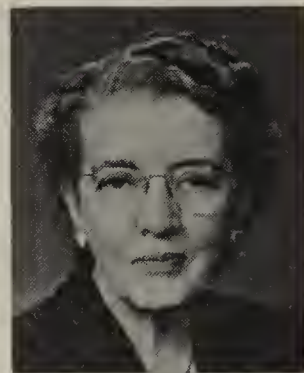
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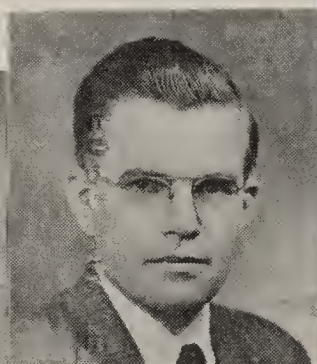
One of a historical series, this pamphlet is published under the direction of the governing Boards of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County.

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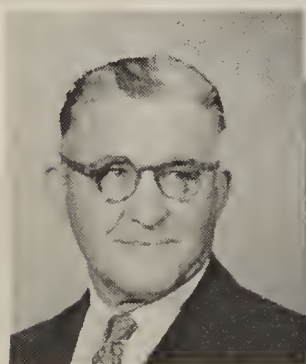
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FOREWORD

The following publication originally appeared in FAMOUS SCOUTS by Charles H. L. Johnston. The publisher, L. C. Page & Company, has graciously granted permission to reprint the chapter.

The Boards and the Staff of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County present this account of Simon Kenton in the hope that it will be interesting and informative to Library patrons.

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IN the year 1773, three woodsmen lay before a blazing fire in the American wilderness. Nearby ran the muddy waters of the Great Kanawha River, and all around were the dense forests which then clothed the vast, unpeopled country of the Ohio.

One was a tall, lean fellow, clad in a soiled suit of buckskin. The second, who bent over the fire, was a middle-aged trapper, also in buckskin, but with a calico shirt above, which showed that he had recently been near the white settlements. The third was a young chap of but eighteen, tall, well formed, and swarthy. His uncut hair fell in dark waves around his shoulders, and his whole form was supple and wiry to the last degree.

“Well, Simon Butler,” said the tall fellow, “I reckon that this is about th’ best place we’ve ever struck fer a camp ground. An’ now that we’re here we kin rest a bit. But tell me, son, ef you ain’t travelin’ sorter under false pretenses. Fer I’ve a notion that your name ain’t quite exactly ez you say it is. Come now, boy, ain’t I right?”

The young fellow had turned very red beneath the sunburn on his cheeks. He stammered out his reply.

“N-n-ow what do you know?” he asked. “I’m

not going to tell you my whole history up to now."

"Might ez well," grunted the tall man. "So long ez a feller's a good sort out here, don't make no difference what his name might have been back in th' settlements. Now, make a clean breast uv it. Ain't I a-tellin' you what is right?"

The young fellow winced. "Well," said he, straightening up, "I might as well make a clean breast of it. My name is n't Butler; it's Kenton, Simon Kenton, and I was born in Fauquier County, Virginia. I had as happy a home as any man, and I was expecting to settle down upon a farm which my father had given me, when I fell in love with as beautiful a girl as the sun ere shone upon. But another fellow loved her too, a fellow called Leitchman; and because I would not give up my suit I was caught and pummeled by his friends. I swore revenge upon the man who had instigated this. I challenged Leitchman to a stand-up fight. We had an awful battle, but finally I got him down and tied him to a bush by winding his long hair in the branches. Then I beat him so hard that he finally lay lifeless before me,—at least, I feared that I had killed him.

"Frightened at this, for I knew that I would be hung, I immediately resolved upon flight. I struck out for the West. I knew that a reward might be offered for my capture, and so I turned my name into Butler, instead of Kenton, and as Butler I wish to be known. Mind me, now: never give away my secret, and always call me Simon Butler,—or else some sharp

ear will catch my real name; I will be caught, and a rope will be around my neck."

"I promise you, pardner," said the thin fellow. "Strader is the name I go by, but I've had a dozen others. Yager, here, our other pal, has also had his own experiences about which we'd better say nothing. Now, I'm goin' for my traps, and let's hope I've had a good day's catch." And, so saying, he was off into the wildwood.

The three men lived peacefully together, trapping and hunting. Finally in March, 1773, a body of Shawnees discovered the home of the bold white invaders, and attacked it. As the trappers fled into the forest, Strader fell dead; but Kenton and Yager got safely off, with no blankets or provisions, but with their guns and some ammunition. Hastily they fled through the dense wood in the direction of the Ohio River, with no guide but the moss upon the trees, on the northward side, and with very little to eat save squirrels, roots, and berries. Finally, upon the fifth day, they reached the banks of the river, completely worn out. But luck was with them. Below came the smoke from a white man's encampment, and, crawling to this, they soon found a party of explorers, who gave them enough food to sustain their strength. They were, for the time being, safe.

But Kenton soon left for a lonely trip into the forest, in search of furs; and here he lived until the breaking out of Lord Dunmore's War, when he was enrolled as a scout with the English and Virginian troops. He did good service, and with him often

was Simon Girty,—that white renegade who made the attack upon the pioneer settlement of Bryan's Station in Kentucky. At this time Girty was considered to be a great scout and soldier, and brought much valuable information to the camp of the English. The war was soon over, and Kenton returned to his life of woodland rover, trapper and explorer.

Drifting towards the then unknown West, he finally reached Boonesborough when it was but a tiny little settlement. His life had been adventurous and he had many a brush with the redskins, but he now determined to join the first settlers of Kentucky in their attempt to establish a town in the land of insecurity. Here he was employed as a spy, with excellent success, and was in the two sieges of that stout and impregnable little fortress.

In the year 1777, several men who were working in the fields near Boonesborough were attacked by Indians, and they ran towards the fort, which was some distance away. A red man caught one of the whites and tomahawked him, but as he stooped over to scalp him he was covered by Kenton's rifle. A sharp crack, and he fell dead. Kenton had shot him from a distance of about two hundred yards.

"Come, boys," cried Daniel Boone at this moment, "let's outside to their rescue."

As he spoke, Kenton rushed out with him, and hastened in the direction of the fleeing settlers. The red men shot at them as they approached, and Boone fell to the ground, badly wounded. A red man was immediately upon him, with his knife in the air, but,

as he seized the great pioneer, Kenton sprang at him. With the quickness of a cat he felled the red man with a blow from his musket, and then seizing Boone in his arms ran with him to the fort. The gates were opened to receive them and soon all were inside.

Next morning the great Daniel Boone sent for Kenton, and, seizing him warmly by the hand, said:

“Well, Simon, yesterday you behaved yourself like a man. You are a fine fellow, Simon. May you continue to live, and do other deeds as noble as the one which you performed for me. I am deeply grateful.”

Kenton smiled, for he knew what these few words meant from Boone, the man of action, whose motto was to do and not to talk.

In 1778 Boone led an expedition against the Shawnee towns upon the Ohio and Little Miami Rivers. Kenton went along as a scout, and was one day far in advance of the party, when he heard voices in the thicket. He stood still behind a tree. As he waited, two Shawnees — mounted on a single pony — came into view. Kenton waited until they neared him, and then fired two shots in quick succession. One red man fell dead, and the other was badly wounded, so Kenton rushed from his hiding place with a yell of joy. But it came near being his last cry, for, as he came up to the two redskins, a yell arose from every side, and he was soon surrounded by about forty Shawnees. He turned and ran as fast as legs could be forced to go. By dodging and hiding he at last reached his own party, who, advancing to the attack, soon drove off the red men.

After returning to Boonesborough, Kenton went upon a scouting expedition to steal Indian ponies, and was so successful that he determined to make another attempt. So with two other bold spirits — Clark and Montgomery — he started for the Shawnee town of Chillicothe on the Ohio River, where the red men had many fine horses. He was a true adventurer — was Kenton — and we will see how his uncurbed spirit got him into many difficulties.

The three plainsmen reached the vicinity of this celebrated Indian town without even seeing a redskin. “Ah,” thought Kenton, “this time I will astonish those people of Boonesborough, sure. Come, boys, we’ll put some salt down here, capture the ponies when they come up to lick it, and be off before the red men know that we’ve been anywhere near.”

It proved easy to catch the horses. Soon seven were procured, and, putting halters on their heads, the three scouts were soon riding towards the Ohio River. But a terrible rain and wind storm arose. They found it impossible to cross the stream, for the Ohio boiled and surged like the current of Niagara. The horses refused to swim the current, so they had to be driven back seven miles to a pasture, where the animals could be turned loose to graze.

Next day the horses were driven back to the Ohio, but again they refused to cross. Here was a dilemma indeed. Realizing that the red men were now in full pursuit, three of the best animals were selected, and the adventurers started for the falls of the Ohio River, where some white soldiers were known to be.

"By George," said Clark, when they had gone a short distance, "one of those horses which we turned out was the best I ever saw. I, for one, am going back to get it. I don't believe the redskins know which way we have gone."

"And we'll go back with you," said both the others; so, turning around, they were soon in search of the four ponies. It was an unfortunate move.

The three men separated, in order to cover more ground. Kenton, himself, started for the ford in the river, where they had endeavored to take the horses across upon the day previous. He went along cautiously. Finally, as he was in a small belt of timber, he heard a wild war-whoop just in front of him, warning that red men were near. Just then he came upon a bank, and, mounting it, perceived a dozen redskins before him, gazing at some tracks in the soil. He saw that in a moment he would be discovered. So he aimed at the nearest Indian, fired, and then ran his horse through a clump of woods that had been uprooted by the storm. With a wild yell the red men started in pursuit.

Kenton rode well and hard. As he came out of the timber a redskin met him. Leaping from his pony the Indian rushed at him with his tomahawk raised. The scout had not time to load. He drew back to hit him with his gun, when two arms were wound around his body. A Shawnee had crept up in the rear, unseen, and had him fast. "I surrender," cried Kenton. "Do with me as you will."

The redskins bound him with deer thongs, and as

they did so Montgomery (one of his white companions) rode up and fired at them. He missed, and with a loud yell the red men started in pursuit. In a half hour they returned, brandishing his scalp on a long pole. "Ugh! Ugh!" said they. "Your friend he make no fight. He one big coward!" Clark escaped their eyes, and arrived safely at a white settlement called Logan's Fort.

But the Indians were going to have some fun, and in their own manner. Catching their wildest horse they lashed Kenton to his back, tying mocassins on his hands so that he could not untie himself. His neck was bound with a thong to the neck of the horse, while the red men crowded around, saying:

"You steal Injun hoss again, heh? Injun got heap, good hoss,—you ride away with some? You Long Knife like Injun hoss, heh? You steal whole lot, heh? Now Long Knife on Injun hoss, but no steal it, heh? Ugh! Ugh!"

Then, having Kenton securely bound, they struck the pony with whips, and he ran off into the woodland. The unfortunate man on his back was scratched and torn by briars and twigs, besides being bumped against trees and bruised by being struck by saplings. The horse to which he was bound wandered about all day, but at nightfall he grew lonely and returned to the other ponies with the Indians. He jogged along quietly by the side of that of the chief man.

That night the now half-exhausted Kenton was laid upon his back and tied to stakes driven in the ground. A pole was placed across his breast and his



... brandishing his scalp on a long pole.

arms tied to it; then his neck was tied to a tree. Clouds of gnats and mosquitoes surrounded and stung him, but, in spite of that, he was left this way for three nights.

Finally the little party neared Chillicothe, and all the redskins in that encampment came out to welcome the captors of poor Kenton. When they saw the white man they yelped and danced around him, beating him with clubs and kicking him. For about an hour they continued this treatment, and then left him to the gnats and mosquitoes while they had a feast. In the morning they decided to make him run the gauntlet.

As Kenton looked down the two lines of redskins — about two hundred in all — he saw that nearly all had stout, hickory clubs, but one or two were armed with sharp knives. He knew that these intended to kill him when he ran by. In an instant his mind was made up. When the word was given for him to go, he ran as hard as he could, and, just before he reached the first Indian armed with a knife, he broke through the line and made off to the woods. He could run like a deer, and was rapidly drawing away from his pursuers, who, with savage cries, started after the runaway.

“Now,” thought Kenton, “I can get away.” But his hopes of freedom were to be speedily quenched. An Indian, returning from hunting, just then came through the woodland, and, seeing the escaped white man, made a running dive at him. With a dull thud both came to the ground, for the red man would have made an excellent football player. In a moment poor Kenton was seized and bound, kicked, beaten, and left for

dead. But, fearing that their captive would die, some red men returned and gave him food and water. "We need you," said they. "Ugh! Ugh! We give you good trial."

Next day Kenton was taken to the council-chamber. In the centre of a circle of warriors stood the oldest chief with a knife and a stick in his hand. He passed a war club to one of the surrounding warriors, and the fellow struck the ground with it. This meant that he wished to see the prisoner die. As he did so the old man cut a notch upon one side of the stick. But some of the red men passed it on, meaning that they voted for the life of Simon Kenton, who just about now began to wish that he had never seen an Indian pony. The head man tallied upon the stick, first upon one side, then upon the other; and when all was over it could be plainly seen that the verdict was "death to the prisoner."

Kenton looked cheerful, determined to show no lack of courage in this trial, for the Indian detests a coward. But it must now be decided where he was to be put to death. After again taking a vote, it was decided that he must die at Wapitomic, an Indian settlement nearby. He was taken in charge, therefore, by several braves and marched towards the place of execution, passing through many encampments en route, in all of which he was forced to run the gauntlet, and was severely beaten and kicked.

Every moment young Kenton hoped to have an opportunity to escape; but he had no chance. Finally as they were passing through the last village, one of

his guards let go his hold upon him, and, turning towards the woods, he ran as he had never run before. Although weak from torture and lack of proper food, he soon left his pursuers in the rear. Hope rose high in his breast. He pushed on, panting, sure that he could soon get into the dense forest where he could not be tracked. But alas! Suddenly a body of fifty redskins on horseback came in his path. They saw him. In a moment he was surrounded, caught, and carried back to his guardians, who said with some show of appreciation. "Ugh! You Long Knife run like the red deer. Ugh! Your name not Long Knife but He-Of-The-Winged-Foot."

They entered Wapitonica, and, as Kenton's face had already been stained with black dye, which showed that he had been condemned to death, he little hoped to go free. But the love of life is strong when one is but twenty-three. Eagerly he watched for another opportunity to get away, and, as he peered about him upon the yelping band which came from their wigwams to view the new prisoner, his eye looked keenly for a chance to free himself. Suddenly, as he gazed upon the howling throng, his eye lighted with a spark of pleasure, for there before him was Simon Girty, the renegade, and a brother scout in earlier days.

"Girty!" he ejaculated. "Don't you know me?"

The renegade looked at him carefully. "By all that's true," he cried, "it's my old friend, Simon Butler." Then, stepping to his side, he whispered, "Leave it all to me. I'll see that you get away. Say nothing, but do as I say, when the time comes."

The young prisoner was hurried to the council-chamber, and there was asked how many white men were in Kentucky. He was true to his friends and said that he did not know, but, thinking it better to make the numbers greater than they really were, he named every man who had some military title attached to his name. He thus created the impression that the whites were very strong.

“But what is your own name?” asked a chief.

“Simon Butler,” answered the brave youth.

Immediately Simon Girty rushed up to him — for he had just entered — and embraced him with ardor. He kissed him upon both cheeks, and, turning to the scowling warriors, addressed them in these words:

“Warriors, this man is my friend; I desire that you give him over to me. See, I have just taken seven scalps of the whites, which are at my belt. Warriors, shall I be denied what I ask? When has the hand of Katepacomen (his Shawnee name) been clean when that of his Indian brother was bathed in blood? Has Katepacomen ever spared the white man’s scalp? Now the white brother of Katepacomen has fallen into the hands of his Indian brothers, and they wish to torture him. Can I stand by and see my brother eaten with the flames? To those who are born warriors of the Shawnees, the life of a white prisoner is given for the asking; will my brothers deny so little a thing to the brother born among the white men, who has chosen to live among his red brothers?”

This was spoken in the Shawnee tongue, so Kenton did not understand a word of it, but, when the renegade

had finished, it could be plainly seen that the red men did not all approve of the ideas which he expressed. "Ugh!" said one chief. "This paleface is a bad man. Has he not stolen our horses? Has he not tried to kill one of our young men? Such a bad man can never be a brother to us, as are you, O, Katepacomen."

"Ugh! Ugh!" said another. "Many of our people have come a long way to see the paleface killed. We cannot be like women who change their minds every hour. It will be cruel to disappoint our people. Let the paleface be tortured!"

Simon Girty listened with impatience to these remarks. Then, springing to his feet, he said:

"Warriors, let the war club be again passed around, and let us give the paleface his life. Has Katepacomen ever spared the white man's scalp? Has he ever plead before for the life of a captive? Never before has he ever asked a boon of his red brothers, and they always grant such a request to their own brothers. If the warriors of the Shawnees trust in the good faith and love of Katepacomen, let them give him the life of his white brother. I have spoken."

"How! How!" said the big chief. "Let the war club be passed."

It was handed around, and this time the decision was for freedom.

Thankful, but still afraid, Kenton went to the tent of the renegade, who immediately gave him a suit of clothes, as his had been torn from him by the infuriated Shawnees. He was fed, warmed, and in a few days felt as of old. The renegade had made good his promise.

So lived the plucky pioneer for about three weeks, and he began to think that he would go free. But he was to suffer many other misfortunes before he would again see his own people. One day as he came from Girty's tent, he heard a Shawnee warrior making a peculiar whoop.

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"What is that?" he asked of the renegade.

"That is a call to the council-chamber," was the answer, "and I fear that your case is again to be tried. Come, we must go there, as I am one of the tribe."

When they entered the dreaded room, the savage who had been whooping, gave his hand to Simon Girty, but scowled when he saw Kenton and refused to clasp his outstretched fingers. Kenton felt a cold chill creep down his spine. Many chiefs were there. They scowled at the prisoner and refused his hand. "Ugh!" said one to him. "This time Long Knife, the horse stealer, must die. Your white brother cannot save you. You must feed the crows."

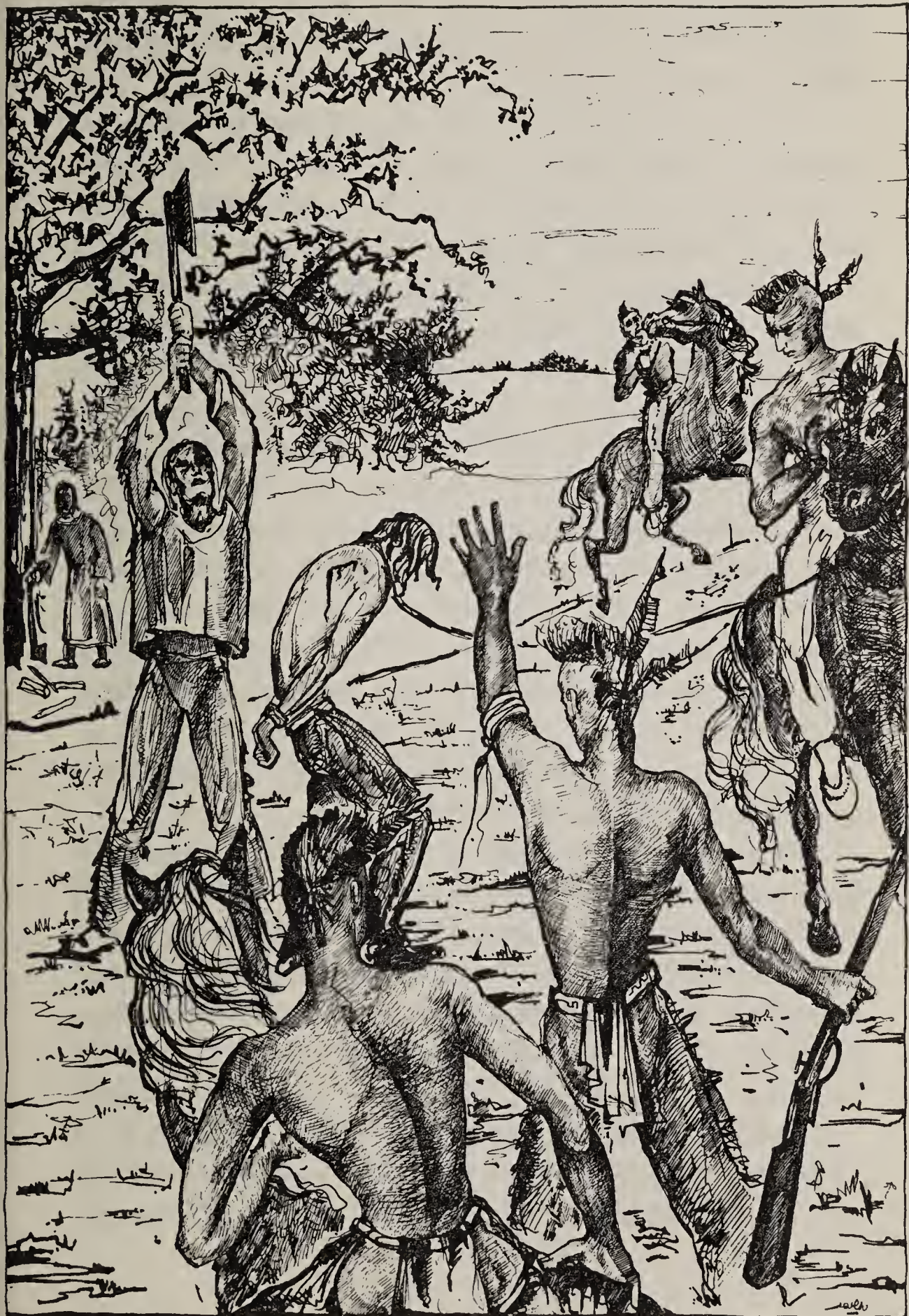
But Simon Girty made an impassioned plea for his life, to which the redskins listened courteously, and then passed around the war club. Almost unanimously it was decided that the Long Knife should meet with death; so, seeing that he could not save his brother scout, the renegade came up to him, embraced him, and said with feeling: "Well, my friend, good-bye. I have tried to save you, but I cannot do so. Good-bye."

Immediately a burly chief seized him by the collar; he was bound with deer thongs and given to a guard of scowling red men, who made off with him, after first

throwing the rope around his neck. They rode beside him on horseback, while he trudged along on foot, endeavoring to keep up his courage, although he now felt that his last day had surely come. "I can still smile though," said Kenton to himself; and this he did, in spite of his predicament.

Two or three miles beyond Wapatomica, and a few yards from the trail, sat a warrior watching his squaw chopping wood for the evening meal. When he saw the white prisoner, he uttered a loud, guttural exclamation. "Ugh! Ugh!" said he. "Paleface kill my brother! now paleface die," and, seizing an axe, he bounded toward the young Virginian. Before the guards could stop him, he had struck the defenseless young man, and had cut a deep gash in his shoulder-blade. He raised his arm for another blow, but was overpowered by the other Indians, who said to him, "It is not now time for the Long Knife to die. Only wait and you shall have revenge."

Almost fainting from loss of blood, the pluckiest man upon the frontier staggered onward, and soon entered a large village upon the headwaters of the Scioto River. The party halted for the night, and poor Kenton sank upon a blanket in a swoon. When he opened his eyes, a large solemn-visaged Indian was standing over him, gazing at his bleeding form with an eye of deep compassion. It was Logan, that great and eloquent leader of the Mingoes, whose life has been sketched in "Famous Indian Chiefs." The great chieftain's heart was touched by the manly beauty and courage of the young Virginian. Always of a



He raised his arm for another blow..

compassionate disposition, he was moved by the misfortunes of the luckless captive, and his words bore full witness to his thoughts:

“I am a great chief,” said he. “You are to go to Sandusky, where they speak of burning you. But you will not be burned, for I will send two runners there who will speak well of you. What Logan commands is seldom disobeyed. Be of good cheer. You shall not be made away with. I have spoken.” And, so saying, he walked solemnly away.

Kenton was much cheered by this piece of news. He stumbled into Logan’s tepee, and remained there quietly throughout the evening. In the morning the two runners were dispatched to Sandusky, as Logan had promised, for he was a man of the greatest truth and honesty. The prisoner did not again see the solemn chieftain until he was about to leave for Sandusky, when the friendly Indian walked up to him, gave him a piece of bread, and said:

“You are to be taken to Sandusky. Logan says good-bye,” and then walked away.

When the little party arrived at Sandusky, the prisoner’s high hopes were again dashed to the ground, for he learned from his guards that Logan’s intercession in his behalf had been in vain. “You are to be burned tomorrow morning,” said one of his Shawnee companions. “Pray to the Great Father, for nothing now can save you.” Kenton — as usual — smiled.

As he stood dejectedly in the village street, a Frenchman called Captain Drewyer, who was employed by the English as Indian agent, came in view. When he

saw the white man, his face changed its expression. "Voila," said he. "A captive, eh? To be burned, eh? We will see,—we will see;" and, so saying, he went into the Indians' council house.

In a half an hour he came out smiling, and walking up to Kenton said, with great friendliness:

"You are to go with me to Detroit. I haf won you from the bloodthirsty redskin. Tiens! You owe me a barrel full of beaver-skins, for I haf saved your own skin. Voila! Be cheerful! You shall haf a dre-enk of wine."

In a few moments Drewyer set out for Detroit with his overjoyed captive. "At last," thought the half-famished Kenton, "I am free from the shadow of death. At last." But the English employee was most curious to know the strength of the whites in far distant Kentucky.

"The Americans there, my boy. How many are there? Eh? How many forts, eh? Are they as strong as the English in Canada, eh?"

"I am only a private in the army," said Kenton. "Being so low in rank, my range of vision is small. I have seen little, for I have had plenty to do wherever I have been stationed. The men are many, but how many I cannot say." The Frenchman saw that he could get little information, so gave up his interrogations. "You shall haf good treatment," said he. "You are a brave fellow."

The two travellers arrived at Detroit in October, and there Kenton remained for eight months in fairly strict confinement, for he had a wide range by day, but

had to report to the British officer every morning and evening. It took him some time to get over the treatment which he had received at the hands of the red men; for he had been made to run the gauntlet eight times, had been tied to the stake on three occasions, and had received twenty knife thrusts, besides a cut from an axe, in his slender body. But youth quickly recuperates, and Kenton soon was planning to escape to his friends and companions in far-away Kentucky.

At Detroit were two young Kentuckians who had been captured from Boone and Logan's command at the battle of the Blue Licks. "Oh for one more sight of Old Kentucky," said they to the young frontiersman. "If it only were not so far, and if we only had some guns."

"I can get those from the redskins," Kenton replied. "We will hide them in the woods, and some day, when all is propitious, we will escape."

Through a citizen of the town, some ammunition was secured and hidden in the woods. Three rifles were purchased from the red men through presents of rum. Finally, when all was quiet one afternoon, the three prisoners met in the woodland and turned toward the South. They plunged onward through the wilderness, and in one month were in Louisville, Kentucky. At last the hardy Kenton was back among his own. Pluck and courage had won, and a year of captivity, torture and exile had been brought to a glorious close. Three cheers for the nerve of Simon Kenton! Hurrah for the Virginian boy with the pluck of ten!

The sturdy pioneer did not rest upon the reputation which he had acquired, but soon again entered the frontier service as a guide and scout, often penetrating the hostile region from which he had just escaped. And now a good piece of news reached his ears from far distant Loudoun County in Virginia. Leitchman (the fellow whom he thought that he had killed) was not dead, but was very much alive, and a prosperous farmer. "Henceforth I am no longer Simon Butler," cried the refugee. "I am once more Simon Kenton, the Virginian; and now I will communicate with my family, and get them to move to Kentucky,— the land of the blue-grass and the sunshine." This he did; his parents crossed the mountains into the fertile country and took up a large plantation upon the frontier, where, much to their annoyance, they were frequently attacked by prowling hands of Shawnees. But Simon Kenton and a band of other pioneers had many a fight with the redskins. At last they were driven back across the Ohio to remain. When "Mad Anthony" Wayne marched against Little Turtle* and fought him at Fallen Timbers, it sealed the fate of the red man's supremacy in this country. Simon Kenton was a major in Wayne's command, but he was not present at the great fight,— much to his regret. Kentucky was henceforth a land of whites; the redskins had been driven from that "dark and bloody ground" which was once their great hunting ground,— the home of the elk, the bison, the beaver, and the bear.

Daniel Boone became involved in troubles over

*See description in " Famous Indian Chiefs."

his land in later years, and so did Simon Kenton. Both had poor and illegal title to great tracts of territory in Kentucky, and both, to escape law suits, moved into the then unsettled State of Missouri, across the turbid current of the Mississippi. Kenton's lands in Kentucky were forfeited to the state for taxes, while he, in quiet and seclusion, lived near the little town of Urbana, in central Missouri, until the fighting in the War of 1812, between Great Britain and the United States. The old frontiersman's blood was again aroused at this time, and, joining the force under General Shelby which marched towards Detroit, he was present at the great battle of the Thames, which settled the disputed western boundaries between the two governments. The redskins were no longer on the warpath, and, strange as it may seem, Simon Kenton moved to a cabin near the old Indian town of Wapatomica,—the scene of his earlier persecutions by the savages, forty-two years before.

Kenton was now very poor, but he possessed one sorry-looking old nag. "I am going back to Kentucky," said he one day, "and see if I cannot get back some of my land. I have fought for my State. I helped to make it what it is. The people should do something for me in my old age. If I know the warm hearts of the Kentuckians, they will not let me starve now that I am poor and too crippled to work."

The shabby old scout stopped at the house of Major Galloway, at Xenia, Ohio, upon the first night of his journey. When his fellow Kentuckian saw his ragged clothes and spavined mare, he exclaimed:

“Any State which could leave a famous fighter like yourself to starve in his old age has no idea of justice. Simon Kenton, you will have assistance from our people. I can assure you of that. And, if they will not assist you, I will.”

In Louisville a friend gave him a suit of clothes and a hat. Thus, cleanly dressed, the old man went to the State capitol and here was greeted with loud acclaim by the prominent men of the State. “It was the proudest day of my life,” he used to say long afterwards, “when they took the old pioneer, placed him in the speaker’s chair, and gave three cheers for the ‘pluckiest man on the old frontier.’”

Yes, pluck, which has always been appreciated by the American people, was warmly appreciated then. Simon Kenton had his lands restored to him, and had a pension granted him by the fair State whose early struggles he had been a part of. Now, with a sufficiency to insure an old age of no actual want, the aged pioneer returned to his little cabin upon the Mad River in Ohio. Here he would often sit before the threshold of his humble abode, and in the long, warm days of summer, while the veery’s flute-like notes sounded from the dogwood tree, would call to his memory those thrilling scenes through which he had passed when a youth. He had camped, trapped, fought, and scouted through a great wilderness which was now peopled by the men of his own race. He had seen the gradual winning of the Middle West, first by the English, then by the Americans. He had witnessed the gradual extinction of the red men, those warriors of cruel hearts in war-

fare. He had seen the first flatboat upon the Ohio River, and the first log house in the wild regions near that bending stream. He had made history.

So dreamed the old frontiersman, and so quietly ended his life. In 1836, at the ripe age of eighty-one, the hand of Death touched him gently upon the shoulder; and, in the silence of the forest — that silence which he loved so well — his friends buried the body of the staunch old veteran pioneer.

If you admire pluck, admire this man. If you care for bravery, here is a person who possessed it. And the lesson of his life is a good one for young men to remember. It is: Never lose your courage, no matter what is the situation in which you find yourself. Never give up. You do not know when your luck is going to change. Keep a stiff upper lip, and, perhaps when you least expect it in a trying situation, something will happen that will rescue you. Be brave; smile in adversity; and in the end you will win. That is what saved Simon Kenton, the pluckiest man upon the Ohio frontier; and that is what will save you. Do not forget the life of this veteran pioneer!

